

PHILOSOPHY

The goal of the Cohoes City School District is to provide a continuum of appropriate educational services in the least restrictive environment to all students with disabilities in need of special education. In providing these educational services, the Cohoes City School District is responsive to the continually evolving nature of the relationship of special education to general education.

Further, it is believed that appropriate special education services for students with disabilities is best achieved by working to cultivate ongoing parental involvement (i.e., natural/adoptive parents, legal guardian, or surrogate parent). Parent involvement in all aspects of the design and delivery of educational services is invited, encouraged and desired. For students to receive special education services a parent's written consent is required.

A continuum of educational services is based upon the following principles:

- The educational services received by Cohoes students are determined through response to intervention and evaluations that identify the level of support, related, and/or instructional services required to meet the individual educational needs of students;
- The educational services are provided in the least restrictive environment which is appropriate to meet the students' special educational needs;
- The educational services emphasize the individual educational needs of students rather than focus on the disability as the basis for appropriate grouping.

These principles reflect the approach and philosophy of the Cohoes City School District.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Cohoes City School District, a partnership of school, parent and community, is committed to preparing its students for the future. We believe that students can and will learn the prescribed curriculum. Our purpose is to educate all students to a high level of academic performance utilizing the Effective Schools Process and Frameworks. We will provide an environment where all will learn and we accept the responsibility to teach all students (5/99).

In conjunction with the district's mission statement, the overall goal of the Cohoes Special Education Program is to provide specialized instruction that promotes student learning in order to achieve the standards established by both the district and New York State. The district seeks to accomplish this by:

- ❖ Identifying pupils who qualify for special education and providing appropriate services.
- ❖ Providing services that allow students to be educated with their age appropriate peers in the least restrictive environment.
- ❖ Guaranteeing due process procedures with regard to identification, evaluation and placement of students.

- ❖ Guaranteeing the confidentiality of records and all personally identifiable information.
- ❖ Ensuring that students with disabilities have access to all-educational programs provided by the school district, including extracurricular programs and activities.
- ❖ Ensuring that student needs are identified and provided for through the use of an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- ❖ Promoting programs of instruction that focus on character development and high expectations for students.
- ❖ Providing students with the knowledge, skills, and strategies they will need to secure and maintain employment, and be responsible, productive citizens.

GOALS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. Comply with Federal Laws, State Regulations, and Board of Education Policy pertaining to the education of students with disabilities.
2. Provide staff development for all personnel who work with students with disabilities.
3. Classify students according to eligibility criteria as set forth by Part 200 Regulations of the Commissioner (Section 200.1-22(I-13)).
4. Modify curriculum and provide accommodations as determined by students' needs and state standards.
5. Encourage parental involvement in the IEP process and day to day instruction.
6. Facilitate transition from school-to-work including career awareness/exploration activities (e.g., class instruction, work-study, job shadowing, job coaching, and internships).
7. Provide assistive technology for communication and access to general education curriculum.